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INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL

Preparations for and possible outcome of a special session of the General Assembly on international drug control

Report of the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. At its substantive session in 1996, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 1996/17 in which it decided to recommend to the General Assembly the convening of a special session to consider the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities.

2. In the same resolution, the Council recommended that the General Assembly, at its special session, should review the progress made in implementing the Global Programme of Action annexed to resolution S-17/2, adopted by the Assembly on 23 February 1990. The Council also recommended that the proposed special session of the General Assembly should have the following objectives: to promote adherence to and full implementation of the international drug control treaties; to adopt measures to increase judicial cooperation, to prevent the diversion of chemicals used in illicit drug production, to prevent the illicit demand for drugs, to prevent money-laundering and to strengthen system-wide coordination in the fight against drug trafficking and related organized crime; and to encourage international cooperation to develop programmes for the eradication of illicit crops and alternative development programmes.

3. The Council decided to propose that the special session of the General Assembly should be held in 1998, 10 years after the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.[1] It requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the principal United Nations policy-making body on drug control issues, to act as preparatory body for the special session. In that capacity, the Commission was requested to present proposals to the General Assembly on all organizational matters relevant to the successful preparations for, holding of and follow-up to the special session. The Council requested the Secretary-General to present to the General Assembly at its fifty-first session a report containing recommendations on the possible outcome of, and organizational matters relating to, the proposed special session of the Assembly.

4. The present report has two sections. Section I contains a discussion of the possible outcome of a special session and its anticipated contribution to the effectiveness of international efforts to combat drug abuse and illicit trafficking. It illustrates measures to strengthen international cooperation against drug abuse and illicit trafficking that could emerge from the special session. Section II outlines the preparatory work necessary to achieve the desired outcome. It includes proposals for the draft provisional agenda and a work plan for the sessions of the preparatory body.

I. POSSIBLE OUTCOME OF A SPECIAL SESSION

5. The high-level discussions of drug control issues could result in a reaffirmation by Governments of the political importance of drug control and in renewed commitment by Member States to the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The proposed special session of the General Assembly would represent a new platform for renewed collective action against drug abuse and illicit trafficking and would help set the international drug control agenda for the next decade.

6. The special session would present an opportunity to review and assess the current status of international drug control. In addition, it could lead to the adoption of practical measures to strengthen the effectiveness of

international action in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The possible outcome of the special session, in terms of its impact on various aspects of drug control, is outlined below.

A. Review of the international drug control instruments

7. The special session could reiterate the importance of the international drug control treaties as the legal framework for world-wide action to combat illicit trafficking in and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and could reaffirm their relevance and adequacy. It could call for full implementation of the international drug control treaties by Governments and could urge all Governments that have not yet become parties to all of the treaties to accede to or ratify them as soon as possible, in order to achieve universal adherence and implementation by the end of the millennium.

8. Provided that there is consensus among the parties to the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971,[2] the special session of the General Assembly could make use of its plenipotentiary powers to adopt several amendments to that Convention. Those amendments would reflect various measures that are currently being applied by a large number of States on a voluntary basis, pursuant to requests made by the Council in a series of resolutions. Those measures, which are considered essential for more adequate international control of psychotropic substances, would involve, *inter alia*, establishing an import and export authorization system for substances in Schedules III and IV of the 1971 Convention and establishing a simplified estimate (assessment) system for substances in Schedules II, III and IV of that Convention.

9. The review of the Global Programme of Action could involve Member States examining and reporting on their progress in meeting the relevant objectives of the Global Programme of Action; it could also involve the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) examining the progress made in that area as a result of international efforts. Governments at the special session could identify, on the one hand, those objectives of the Global Programme of Action that, since 1990, have been achieved or have become obsolete and, on the other hand, those drug control challenges that have grown in magnitude over the past few years. On the basis of such developments and the drug control experience accumulated since 1990, the special session could adopt a revised Global Programme of Action, in which revised or newly proposed objectives, and practical measures that should be taken to achieve them, could be outlined. The revised Global Programme of Action could encompass objectives on the aspects outlined below and objectives proposed by Member States, as well as proposals for objectives that might emerge between now and the convening of the special session of the General Assembly.

B. Prevention of diversion of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs

10. The special session could discuss measures that should be taken to ensure full implementation of certain provisions of the 1988 Convention. Thus, the discussion at the special session could lead to globalization and harmonization of the various bilateral and regional approaches to controlling substances used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including the legislative frameworks within which they function. The discussion could also lead to a framework to facilitate the world-wide exchange of information on suspicious transactions involving substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of drugs, including a law enforcement strategy aimed at enhancing investigative capacities. In addition, the deliberations could result in a strategy for establishing, maintaining and operating a special surveillance list for chemicals.

C. Strengthening measures against the abuse of and trafficking in stimulants

11. The discussion at the special session could lead to the adoption of measures at the national and international levels to combat the abuse of, clandestine manufacture of and trafficking in psychotropic substances, particularly amphetamine-type stimulants.

D. Reduction of the illicit demand for drugs

12. The discussion at the special session could lead to the adoption of a declaration on the guiding principles of demand reduction, which could set forth guidelines to strengthen, at the national and international levels, the fight against illicit demand for drugs. The process of elaborating guiding principles of demand reduction was initiated by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1995/16. Subsequently, at the thirty-ninth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, it was stated that the objective should be to ensure that the draft declaration was ready for adoption by the special session and that it was important to produce a text that could command world-wide support. A preliminary outline of the draft declaration is contained in annex I to the present report. It reflects the current status of the draft declaration, based on preliminary proposals received from Governments and interested organizations.

E. Prevention of and action against money-laundering

13. The deliberations of the special session could lead to the adoption of measures to be taken by States to implement fully the provisions against money-laundering that are contained in the 1988 Convention. In addition, States could agree on a framework of activities to increase international cooperation in confiscating the proceeds of illicit drug trafficking and in preventing the laundering of such proceeds.

F. Eradication of illicit crops and alternative development

14. Over a period of several decades the international community has recognized the usefulness of crop substitution and alternative development in the fight against illicit crop cultivation and drug trafficking. In a similar context, UNDCP and its predecessor bodies have examined various modalities for the safe eradication of illicit crops, with emphasis on the need to identify ecologically acceptable approaches. The special session could further consider that issue, paying particular attention to the action taken by Governments in promoting and financing alternative development; the programmes and experience of UNDCP; the role of law enforcement in securing reductions and eradicating illicit crops; and methodologies for effective alternative development programmes. This could lead to an agreement on protocols for field trials or the application of environmentally safe methods for the eradication of narcotic plants, as well as the endorsement of the approach to alternative development that has been developed over the years by Governments, UNDCP and other international entities.

G. Judicial cooperation

15. The special session could adopt measures to improve cooperation between judges and prosecutors in order to achieve full implementation of articles 5 (confiscation), 6 (extradition) and 7 (mutual legal assistance) of the 1988 Convention. Recommendations might be developed on ways of protecting judges, prosecutors and witnesses from violence or the threat of violence.

H. Coordination in the fight against drug trafficking and related organized crime, against terrorist groups engaged in drug trafficking and against illicit arms trade

16. The discussion at the special session could lead to the adoption of measures to promote law enforcement cooperation and the exchange of information on the involvement of drug traffickers in illegal arms sales and in terrorist activities.

I. Strengthening the United Nations machinery for international drug control

17. The deliberations at the special session could lead to a strengthening of the advocacy and leadership role of UNDCP in international drug control as a global centre of expertise and a source of technical cooperation. In addition, Member States could commit themselves to providing a more solid, broader-based system of support for international cooperation in drug control through active participation in the activities of UNDCP. The special session could also result in the revitalization of the intergovernmental drug control machinery with respect to the provision of policy guidance to UNDCP, to the approval of the budget of the Fund of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and to the potential use of subsidiary organs.

II. PREPARATORY WORK FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION

A. Role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as preparatory body for the special session

18. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1996/17, requested the Commission on Narcotic Drugs to act as preparatory body for the special session of the General Assembly to be held in 1998. In contrast to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, which has limited membership, all Member States and observers could participate in the preparatory body, in accordance with established practice.

19. The preparatory body could meet twice for two days prior to or following the fortieth and forty-first sessions of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The bureau of the preparatory body could meet between those sessions, as required, to advance the preparatory work. There might be a need for the preparatory body to meet for a third time immediately before the special session.

20. UNDCP would serve as secretariat to the preparatory body, in close coordination with the Department for Policy Coordination and Sustainable Development of the Secretariat.

21. At its first session, to be held in March 1997, the preparatory body would elect its bureau, paying due regard to equitable geographical distribution. The bureau, which would consist of one chairman, three vice-chairmen and one rapporteur, could serve all sessions of the preparatory body. In addition, the preparatory body could conduct a general discussion on the draft provisional agenda for the special session of the General Assembly and could establish documentation requirements.

22. The following elements could be considered for inclusion in the draft provisional agenda for the first session of the preparatory body:

Draft provisional agenda for the first session of the preparatory body

1. Election of officers.

2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

3. Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly to consider the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities and to propose new strategies, methods, practical activities and specific measures to strengthen international cooperation in addressing the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

23. At its second session, to be held early in 1998, the preparatory body could finalize the draft provisional agenda and all other arrangements for the special session. It could also examine, on an informal basis, documents that may be adopted as part of the final outcome of the special session, such as the revised Global Programme of Action. The preparatory body would make recommendations on the following: the exact title, draft provisional agenda and dates of the special session; the composition of the bureau; the establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee; and the membership of the Credentials Committee and the General Committee. In doing so, the preparatory body would pay due regard to the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

24. The following elements could be considered for inclusion in the draft provisional agenda for the second session of the preparatory body:

Draft provisional agenda for the second session of the preparatory body

1. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.

2. Preparations for the special session of the General Assembly to consider the fight against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and related activities and to propose new strategies, methods, practical activities and specific measures to strengthen international cooperation in addressing the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking.

3. Adoption of the reports of the preparatory body on its first and second sessions.

25. The International Narcotics Control Board, as well as organs, organizations and specialized agencies in the United Nations system and multilateral development banks, could contribute to the preparations for the special session. The General Assembly might therefore request them to consider the issues before the special session and to make recommendations thereon in their pertinent fields of experience. The recommendations of those entities, as well as the results of symposia and meetings of non-governmental organizations and other groups, could be brought to the attention of the preparatory body.

26. Elements that could be included in the draft provisional agenda for the special session of the General Assembly, in accordance with the objectives outlined in Council resolution 1996/17 and with established practice, are contained in annex II.

B. Role of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme in support of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

27. With respect to the review of the international drug control instruments, an assessment of the effectiveness of the international drug control treaties and an evaluation report on progress made by Governments in implementing the Global Programme of Action could be prepared in order to assist the special session in its deliberations on those issues.

28. In order to ensure that the substantive results mentioned in section I above will be achieved, it may be necessary to hold a number of meetings of open-ended intergovernmental advisory groups on such issues as amphetamine-type stimulants, demand reduction (including the elaboration of a draft declaration on the guiding principles of demand reduction), money-laundering and judicial cooperation.

29. The final documents of those meetings, which could contain concrete policy measures and other action-oriented material, could form the basis for the drafting of the revised Global Programme of Action. The draft of the revised Global Programme of Action could then be examined, informally, by the preparatory body at its last session.

30. In order to mobilize support by non-governmental organizations for the issues of the special session, a forum for such organizations could be convened. The cost of organizing the forum, including staff costs, could be met from extrabudgetary resources contributed for that purpose, should they become available.

31. Several public information activities should accompany the special session in order to heighten national and international awareness of the drug issue and of international action against it. Such activities could include an exhibit on the activities of the United Nations in drug control and its strategies employed in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The special session could also be supported by a comprehensive public information programme that could include the holding of a series of press briefings at Vienna and in New York prior to and during the special session, the organizing of a journalist encounter and the distribution of information kits.

32. In order to ensure coordination and effective follow-up, a coordinator could be appointed to act as a full-time focal point within UNDCP for all matters relating to the special session.

33. In accordance with Council resolution 1996/17, the preparatory process would be funded with resources from the regular budget of the United Nations. A full cost programme and budget implications would be presented at the time decisions are taken by the General Assembly. While possibilities of redeploying resources appropriated for the biennium 1996-1997 would be sought to the maximum extent possible, by reprogramming and rescheduling lower priority activities, additional resources from the regular budget would inevitably be required in order to maintain an appropriate level of preparatory work for the special session, as mentioned in paragraph 19 above. In view of the continued financial crisis of the Organization and bearing in mind the need to keep costs to a minimum, Governments would be invited to make voluntary contributions in support of the preparatory work.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1988*, vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1019, No. 14956.

Annex I

PRELIMINARY OUTLINE OF THE DRAFT DECLARATION ON THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF REDUCTION OF ILLICIT DEMAND FOR DRUGS

A. Preamble

B. Definitions

C. Objectives of demand reduction

Key element 1. To create a long-term commitment to reduce significantly the illicit demand for drugs through changing attitudes and behaviours, particularly of young people, towards drugs which may be abused, through the development of appropriate programmes, with adequate funding, effective delivery and careful evaluation.

Key element 2. To ensure a comprehensive, balanced and coordinated approach to the illicit demand for drugs, encouraging collaboration and cooperation at all levels in society.

D. Understanding the problem of drug abuse

Key element 3. To undertake national assessments to identify the types of drugs being abused, by which groups and in what manner, as well as the underlying reasons for such abuse.

Key element 4. To raise the awareness of the general public of the impact of drug abuse on society as a whole, by measuring the costs and consequences of such abuse.

E. General strategy

F. Nature of demand reduction programmes

G. Targeting those in need

Key element 5. To identify those groups of people most in need of urgent interventions.

Key element 6. To ensure that any intervention is tailored to the needs of the target group, ensuring that it is appropriate to the culture of the group and matches the resources available.

H. Integration of programmes

Key element 7. To integrate different types of demand reduction programmes, such as education, treatment and community programmes, with each other as well as with general health issues.

Key element 8. To incorporate the issue of the reduction of illicit demand for drugs into other programmes undertaken in a broader socio-economic context.

I. Implementation of programmes

J. Evaluation of programmes

Key element 9. To evaluate the process of implementation and outcome of interventions and to use the results of that evaluation to develop future programmes and policies.

K. Training

Key element 10. To incorporate a drug dimension in vocational and professional training for all those whose work may bring them into contact with drug abusers.

L. International cooperation

M. Roles of international organizations

Key element 11. To identify the mandate of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and other United Nations entities and the role of the non-governmental organizations.

Annex II

ELEMENTS FOR POSSIBLE INCLUSION IN THE DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

[*Note:* Specific items are to be determined by the preparatory body for the special session.]

1. Opening of the session.

2. Minute of silent prayer or meditation.

3. Credentials of representatives to the special session of the General Assembly:

   (a) Appointment of the members of the Credentials Committee;
   (b) Report of the Credentials Committee.

4. Election of the President.

5. Report of the preparatory body for the special session.

6. Organization of the session.

7. Adoption of the agenda.

8. General debate.

9. Review of the international drug control instruments:

   (a) Functioning of the international drug control treaties;
   (b) Review of resolution S-17/2, adopted by the General Assembly at its seventeenth special session, in particular progress made in implementing the Global Programme of Action annexed thereto.

10. Measures to strengthen international cooperation in drug control, in particular:

   (a) Prevention of diversion of chemicals used in illicit manufacture of drugs;
   (b) Strengthening measures against abuse of and trafficking in stimulants;
   (c) Reduction of the illicit demand for drugs;
   (d) Prevention of and action against money-laundering;
   (e) Eradication of illicit crops and alternative development;
   (f) Judicial cooperation;
   (g) Coordination in the fight against drug trafficking and related organized crime against terrorist groups engaged in drug trafficking and against illicit arms trade.

11. Review of the international drug control regime: the role of the United Nations in drug control.

12. Views on matters pertaining to the special session, transmitted by specialized agencies and other relevant bodies of the United Nations system.

13. Adoption of final documents of the special session:

    (a) Political declaration and revised Global Programme of Action;
    (b) Declaration on the guiding principles of reduction of illicit demand for drugs.

14. Follow-up measures for the implementation of final documents adopted by the special session.